Overview of the CSUN Freshman Celebration

The CSUN Freshman Celebration is an annual event that began in the fall semester of 2006. It was originally titled The Freshman Connection Celebration and featured the academic and creative efforts of students who were part of the Freshman Connection – a program for first-semester freshmen who take linked courses as part of a learning community. The first Celebration included student work that was displayed all day in the Grand Salon as well as a slide show, lunch and an awards ceremony.

Judged to be a great success, the Celebration was expanded the following year to include all students enrolled in University 100, the Freshman Seminar that now enrolls more than 1200 first-time freshmen each fall semester. The event has evolved into an exciting showcase of diverse projects that display critical and creative thinking as well as special talents in the areas of digital media and the arts.

The Freshman Celebration often includes several projects in which students respond to the current year’s Freshman Common Reading. While participation is voluntary, faculty members are encouraged to have their classes be involved and each year the number of projects on display has grown.

The event is structured like a festival, where visitors come and go throughout the day (or days) between approximately 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Some drop by for a few minutes while others attend with their entire class if their class section meets on the day of the Celebration.

In addition to viewing the array of projects, students enjoy snacks and beverages and are asked to complete a survey “Reflection Form” that enables their instructor to offer credit for attending the event. Outstanding projects or displays are eligible to receive awards from a team of judges. The project that is most highly ranked with regard to concept, content, originality and execution earns a pizza party for the class members.

By providing an opportunity for students to share work, projects, or other artifacts they’ve created or developed as part of University 100 (or another Freshman Connection class), the Freshman Celebration has played an increasingly important role in generating academic and creative projects and captures the interest and enthusiasm of students and faculty alike.

The Freshman Celebration also takes place online in Moodle as The Virtual Freshman Celebration. This virtual extension of the Celebration enables students to create and display digital projects, and permits us to extend the scope and nature of the event. See the Guidelines for the Virtual Freshman Celebration for more details.